THIS WAY, PLEASE.

YOU'RE HURTING ME!

LET GO OF ME!

NARUMI !

COME, HIGHNESS! THE PRINCE IS TERRIBLY WORRIED!

ACT VIII : KARAKURI *
THE PRINCESS OF THE AUTOMATONS

"THE AUTOMATON PRINCESS"

IT'S BETTER FOR THINGS TO HAPPEN LIKE THIS, FOR THE PRINCESS'S SAKE.

...

GRR...

YES.

WE TRUST IN THE SHIROGANES' NATURAL DISCRETION TO KEEP THIS MATTER QUIET... I HOPE YOU WILL KEEP THIS STORY TO YOURSELVES.

WE THANK YOU FOR SAVING THE PRINCESS.

NARUMI! I...

CLAC

VRROMMM

VLAM

A SHIRO-GANE... WITH A HUMAN.

HM?

WHAT USE WOULD IT BE?

WE WERE BECOMING GOOD FRIENDS!

SHOOT!

PFFT...

HAH! I DON'T AGREE AT ALL!

IT'S USELESS!

TAH

YOU FORCED ME TO LEAVE WITHOUT EVEN GIVING ME A CHANCE TO THANK THEM PROPERLY!

I REMIND YOU THAT THESE PEOPLE SAVED MY LIFE!

I SHALL REPORT YOUR BEHAVIOR TO YOUR SUPERIORS!

WHY ARE SECURITY GUARDS ALWAYS THIS RUDE?

VRRO

ANSWER ME!!!

GOOHH

DJ!!!

WHY ARE YOU LOWERING THE CURTAIN?

CLIC CLIC CLIC CLIC...

CLIC

ASKED US TO ABDUCT YOU.

MS. AP'TCHA...

YOUR... NECK...

?!

OOOHH

CLAC

EXACTLY.

YOU'RE... KIDNAPPING ME?

...WHO ARE YOU?!

WHAT?! BUT...

VJJJ

SCHL AC

YOU LOOK DISAPPOINTED, PRINCESS...

VRROMM...

WELL, WELL... YOU'RE DEFENDING HER, NOW?!

SHE WANTED TO FORGET THAT SHE WAS A PRINCESS FOR JUST A WHILE...

ELISE...

JUST WANTED TO REST A LITTLE.

IT'S TRUE. BUT I DIDN'T KNOW ANYTHING OF HER LIFE.

NOW, I KNOW MUCH MORE.

AT THE BEGINNING, YOU HATED HER BECAUSE SHE DID NOT CHERISH HER LIFE...

...RIGHT?

"SO I KEPT ALL MY FEELINGS BOTTLED UP INSIDE OF ME."

"I TOLD MYSELF THAT I WOULD NEVER BE ABLE TO ESCAPE FROM THIS LIFE..."

YES, I'M ATTACHED TO HER! SO WHAT?! I WAS PLANNING TO CHEER HER UP, EVEN IF I DIDN'T ALWAYS FEEL LIKE I WAS UP TO THE TASK!

AND BECAUSE OF THAT, YOU GOT ATTACHED TO HER?!

YOU ARE SO WEAK, NARUMI.

I COULD FEEL THE PRESSURE SHE FELT AS A PRINCESS.

I THINK I'M GETTING IT NOW! YOU SHIROGANES HAVE BLOCKS OF ICE FOR HEARTS! SO YOU'LL NEVER UNDERSTAND OTHER PEOPLE'S FEELINGS!!!

BUT I DIDN'T EVEN GET A CHANCE!!! YOU CONTACTED HER DAD RIGHT AWAY AND SHE WAS GONE BEFORE I EVEN HAD THE TIME TO TAKE A BREATH!!!

YOU ARE CORRECT, NARUMI.

YOU JUST KEEP YOUR HATRED FOR AUTOMATONS ...

...WHILE LOSING YOUR HUMAN IDENTITY!

IT IS USELESS FOR US TO NURTURE BONDS WITH HUMANS!

THUS...

HUMANS AND SHIROGANES HAVE VERY DIFFERENT GOALS... WHAT COULD WE DO FOR THEM?

OUR ONLY REASON FOR BEING IS THE DESTRUCTION OF AUTO-MATONS.

PEOPLE LIVE, TRYING TO BE HAPPY.

BUT WE SHIROGANES ARE DIFFERENT.

NARUMI.

SHIROGANES ARE "ILLUSORY" BEINGS.

IT IS USELESS FOR US TO TRY TO LEAVE EVEN A FOOTPRINT ON A HUMAN LIFE.

BY THE WAY, WHAT DID YOU REALLY WANT WITH THE LITTLE PRINCESS?

IF ONE DAY AQUA VITAE FLOWS FREELY IN YOUR WHOLE BODY, YOU WILL UNDERSTAND.

OH? REALLY?

I DON'T UNDER-STAND.

I HAVEN'T SEEN HIM SINCE THEN ...

BY THE WAY, WHERE'S GUY?

HM...

MAYBE IT'S BETTER THAT WAY...

HUH?! WHAT?! BUT... UH...

HA HA HA!

...

HE WILL BE BACK SOON.

WWWHHH

ZAN

ZON

CLAC

IIIK

I KNEW YOU STILL HELD A GRUDGE AGAINST MY FATHER.

AH... YOU KNEW?

I HAD A FEELING IT WAS YOU, BARON.

YOU ARE WITH US, ELISE.

TAN

FINALLY!

I DO NOT CONSIDER A PERSON WHO CANNOT FACE MY FATHER EXCEPT BY COMMITTING CRIMES MY UNCLE!

WHAT IS IT? WHEN YOU WERE LITTLE, I OFTEN HELD YOU IN MY ARMS.

DO NOT TOUCH ME!!!

HOW SMART OF YOU!

SPAF

AF

SHUT UP, LITTLE RUNT!

HNN

YOU HAD TO LEAVE THE THRONE TO MY FATHER BECAUSE OF YOUR WEAK CONSTITUTION...

BUT YOU ARE A BARON... AND YOU DARE HIT A DEFENSELESS YOUNG GIRL!

HEUH

HOW SHAMEFUL...

HEUH

BUT IF YOU STILL HAVE AN OUNCE OF HONOR... DO NOT HAVE IT DONE BY THIS MONSTER.

IF YOU WANT TO KILL ME TO TAKE REVENGE ON MY FATHER, FEEL FREE TO DO SO...

GH GH

SHUT UP! WHO SAID I WANTED TO KILL YOU?

I DO RESENT YOUR FATHER, BUT FOR ANOTHER REASON!

AT LEAST HAVE THE COURAGE TO DO IT YOURSELF!

OR MORE EXACTLY, THIS "SOFT STONE" WITH WHICH I WILL BE ABLE TO MAKE AN ALL-POWERFUL MEDICINE!

...

ELISE!

I WANT THE MEDICINE INSIDE OF YOU!

THE CURE...

LOOK AT MY BODY!

IF I HADN'T BEEN SO FRAGILE, I WOULD HAVE BEEN THE SOVEREIGN OF THIS COUNTRY!

VLAP!

YOU KNOW ...

IT'S AP'TCHA WHO TOLD ME THAT STONE WAS IN YOUR BODY.

ZAM

AND THE OTHER AUTOMATONS WHO FOLLOW HER ARE HER OWN CREATIONS. SHE'S A REAL GENIUS!

HA HA HA! ARE YOU SURPRISED?! AP'TCHA IS A PUPPET WHO MOVES ON HER OWN!

CLIC CLIC CLIC CLIC

MY NAME IS AP'TCHA.

THIS IS THE SECOND TIME WE MEET, HIGHNESS.

THAT'S THE AUTOMATON WHO ABDUCTED ME!

AND SHE TOLD ME OF THE EXISTENCE OF THIS MEDICINE.

SHE'S TAKEN CARE OF ME FOR A LONG TIME.

BARON...

HEUH HEUH HEUH

...IS YOU!

HEHEHEH! AP'TCHA NEVER LIES! THE LIAR...

BUT... THIS SOFT STONE...

...IS NOT IN MY BODY!

I REMEMBER WELL...

...THE DAY THAT I MET YOU...

YOU KNOW, AP'TCHA...

IT WAS IN AN OLD ROOM OF THIS CASTLE THAT I MET YOU...

AND WHERE MY GRANDFATHER, CRAZY ABOUT MECHANICAL CLOCKS, OVER-INDULGED IN HIS COLLECTION.

IN THIS CASTLE WE HAD LIVED IN FOR GENER-ATIONS...

CLIC

I WILL GIVE YOU PERFECT HEALTH...

...AND ETERNAL LIFE.

IF YOU FOLLOW MY ADVICE,

...THE AUTOMATONS THAT NARUMI TOLD ME ABOUT?!

SO YOU ARE...

YOU KNOW, ELISE, I DIDN'T KNOW...

...THAT I'D HAVE TO EXTRACT THE STONE FROM YOUR BODY.

I WAS TOLD THAT AUTOMATONS AND HUMANS WERE NOT COMPATIBLE.

YOU KNOW...

YES...

YOU ARE NOT HELPING THE BARON ONLY TO PROVIDE HIM WITH A CURE.

IF THAT'S TRUE, WHAT IS YOUR TRUE GOAL?

A PACT?

ELISE, YOU ARE RIGHT. I MADE A PACT WITH AP'TCHA.

INDEED...

HA HA! ELISE WAS ALWAYS A SMART ONE!

FLAP

HIGHNESS ...

...AND I WILL KILL YOU!

BUT AFTER RETRIEVING IT, YOU WILL BE OF NO USE TO ME ANYMORE ...

I WANT THIS STONE TO MAKE THE ELIXIR!

YOU!

AND WHAT INTERESTS ME...

...IS YOU, PRINCESS.

FLAP FLAP FLAP FLAP FLAP FLAP

...AN AUTOMATON ALSO HAS DESIRES...

...OR RATHER, INTERESTS...

...WHEN I REPLACE YOU?

WHAT WILL I FEEL...

BLACKOUT